

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 14-17, 31-34, and 48-53 are presently active; Claims 14, 15, 31, 32, 48, and 49 have been presently amended, Claims 52 and 53 have been presently added, and Claims 1-13, 18-30, and 35-47 have been presently cancelled without prejudice. No new matter has been added.¹

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (U.S. Pat. No. 5,270,775) in view of Shibusawa et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,088,120). Claims 16-17, 33-34, and 50-51 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki (U.S. Pat. No. 5,270,775) and Shibusawa et al in view of Aikens (U.S. Pat. No. 6,216,113).

In the system of amended Claim 14, the not yet obtained usage information can be completely collected, even if the system or a user raises a certain problem, because the service person or the like can receive and know the not yet obtained usage information, and the service person or the like is capable of manually collecting the same based upon the not yet obtained list outputted per sale branch or the like. In other words, usage information is first automatically collected by the system defined in independent Claim 14 to reduce cost and time, and can then be manually collected if usage information remains based on the not yet obtained list outputted per sales branch or the like (for the purpose of complete and easy collection thereof). None of cited references teach or suggest such a technology.

Further, the not yet obtained list of the present invention inherently decreases the not yet obtained usage information as collection is repeated, in contrast to the cited reference

¹ Specification, page 45, lines 12-18, and page 49, line 11, to page 50, line 4.

Suzuki. That is, Suzuki increases usage information for example by adding a printer to a generated list.

Moreover, as understood from the attached references (filed herewith by way of an Information Disclosure Statement) cited during examination of the corresponding Japanese patent application, the above-mentioned feature is also not taught or suggested in those references, now made of record.

Hence, for these reasons, Applicants submit that independent Claims 14, 31, and 48 and the claims dependent therefrom patentably define over the applied prior art.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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